



On Wednesday, October 25, 2006 State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D. hosted the Region 5 Obesity Summit at the Indiana State Department of Health in Indianapolis.

The purpose of the local summit was to follow up on what began at the 2005 Health Summit: Obesity Prevention and to address the issue of obesity in Indiana by helping community partners build relationships and create collaborations among existing programs that address obesity.

"We know that there are a lot of local initiatives, and we know that people want to take ownership of their initiative," Dr. Monroe said. "We hope that INShape Indiana will serve as a clearinghouse, where all these programs will be linked."

Dr. Monroe challenged public health officials to tackle the issue of obesity at the local level by developing or strengthening county coalitions and reaching out to other disciplines such as colleges/universities, media, worksites, government, food/beverage industry, healthcare providers, schools, and families.

"Everyone has the opportunity to step up to the plate and be a leader," Dr. Monroe said.

During the Region 5 Obesity Summit, Virginia A. Caine, M.D., director, Marion County Health Department, reported on findings from recent comprehensive surveys of Marion County school-aged children and adults on obesity.

"The results of this survey confirm what we have observed and believed. Our children are overweight and in alarming numbers that need a comprehensive community response," said Virginia A. Caine, M.D., director, Marion County Health Department. "This information is critical as we look to support existing wellness and physical activity programs and to help us better understand where new programs and services are needed," said Dr. Caine.

Danielle L. Patterson, senior advocacy director, American Heart Association, spoke about the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the Association's partnership with the Clinton Foundation, and its efforts to address childhood obesity. The American Heart Association sponsored the District 5 Obesity Summit.

Those in attendance shared local success stories, and graciously accepted Dr. Monroe's challenge to tackle the issue of obesity.

Indiana ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation for adult obesity, and 15 percent of students in grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> are overweight. State health officials say that unhealthy behaviors put Hoosiers at risk for chronic diseases and can also affect the fiscal health of Indiana businesses and the state as a whole.

To continue the fight against obesity, the 2006 INShape Indiana Health Summit will be held on Monday, November 27 at the Indiana Convention Center in downtown Indianapolis.